

THE STORY TELLER

IF.

If only I could be the sun,
I'd shine with all my might,
That every day might be to you
A glad one and bright.

Or if I were the moon, I'd send
Downward my softest ray
Of light into your chamber, sweet,
And make it bright like day.

Were I a bird, I'd fly to you
And sing a little song—
A song of tender love and true—
True as the day is long.

Were I a rose, I'd bloom for you,
And in my heart I'd hold
A perfume magically sweet—
As sweet as love untold.

A zephyr I'd softly blow
Where your night's vigil keep,
A breath of puppy-love and true—
To give sweet-dreaming sleep.

But since all these I cannot be,
Heart of my heart, still I
Can be myself—your all-in-all,
And love you till I die.

—Amy Lyman Phillips, in Boston Transcript.

WHEN THE CREEK RAN DRY

DART stood in front of the white dog house, gazing out over the prairie.

"This is living!" he exclaimed, throwing back his narrow shoulders and breathing in the early morning air.

"You had better come in out of the dew," called his sister Sarah, from the doorway.

"There isn't any dew." He raised his shoe for inspection; it was quite dry.

This seemed odd to the girl, and she walked round the house to examine her strawberry-beds. The young plants looked rusty, and as she stood contemplating them a steer stuck his horns against the rails fencing in the ranch and bellowed despairingly.

Sarah and her brother were puzzled; but they had not been in the Montana country long enough to appreciate the significance of these things.

"We must give the strawberries an extra drink to-night," Sarah announced to her younger brother, as she entered the house. And that evening she and Tom, with a pail in each hand, went down to the creek.

While she was filling her pails she looked closely at the bank. Then, with the hem of her apron, she measured from the water up a little distance.

"Last night the water covered that root; it's fallen six inches!" she declared.

"Oh," said Tom, "creeks are always going up and down."

The next evening Sarah measured again, and found the water half a foot lower. This alarmed her, and she sent Tom riding ten miles across country to consult their nearest neighbor, Sam West. The boy reported old Sam as saying:

"In summer Stump creek goes so dry the catfish get dusty swimmin' upstream."

"Then what in the world shall we do?" exclaimed Sarah. She had understood fully that in the dry season the ranch was entirely dependent on the creek.

Bart and Tom returned a blank look to the question, for neither of them was used to deciding matters of importance. Sarah was virtually the head of the family.

"We must have an artesian well," she said; she had heard that there were such wells in that country.

"It would cost like fury!" replied Bart, gloomily. "We have no money to experiment with."

Sarah, however, persisted in her idea, and engaged two men from the nearest town to drill the well. After working several days, they reported that they could not find water. They presented their bill, which Sarah paid, and then they drove off across the prairie.

Bart, who had stood with his sister, watching them, kicked a chip at his feet vindictively.

"Such a thing as this should have been looked into before we came out!" he exclaimed. "I must say, Sarah, you were in a mighty hurry to sell our home back east—you and Uncle Seth! Fifty dollars to live on, no home to go back to and no fit place to live here!"

Sarah's face flushed, but she spoke without resentment.

"We learned all we could through writing," she said, "and I guess you know why I was impatient to come. You know how you used to cough,

and the doctor said this country would cure you well."

"I wonder if we couldn't go home?" struck in Tom. "I should like to get into Uncle Seth's apple orchard again."

"We'll have plenty of fruit next year if we can only keep the ranch going," pleaded Sarah.

"But we can't without water," answered Tom.

Sarah ran into the house and shut herself up for a good cry. "Bart mustn't go back and fade away as mother did!" she thought, in distress.

She could hear the thirsty cattle bellowing in their fruitless efforts to get through the fences to the creek, and she understood that the crisis was at hand. Soon she and her brothers were reduced to the barefells of water that Tom brought from Sam West's artesian well.

One day Tom gave Bart a letter that he had brought from the post office. Bart, after reading it, passed it to his sister.

"I wrote to Uncle Seth," he explained, briefly.

Sarah took the letter, knowing that it sealed the doom of the ranch.

Her uncle was willing to advance money to bring them home, and advised them to sell the ranch if possible and start at once. He would try to find some employment for Tom and Bart, and he would let Sarah keep house for him.

Sarah tried to control her trembling lips.

"Boys," she said, "aren't you willing to stay out here till next spring? We can borrow enough from Uncle Seth to keep us going."

"Next year will be as dry as this," Bart interrupted.

"Perhaps not; let's try it."

"No; I've had enough."

Sarah rose with a sigh and at once prepared to drive to town and attend to all necessary business. She went directly to the office of David Judson, from whom she had purchased the ranch, and proposed to him that he should buy it back.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked.

"We can't live there without water. In all our correspondence you did not mention the liability that the creek would go dry. You may have the place back, with all the improvements, for what we paid you."

"A bargain in a bargain, Miss Morse," said Judson, "and I don't know as I want the ranch back."

Sarah opened the door and then turned.

"Mr. Judson," she said, "I truly believe that to induce people to leave their old homes and come to a strange country under false hopes is one of the cruelest crimes in the world."

When the girl reached home she found the boys taking down the few pictures and packing the books.

"I guess we can get off by next Wednesday," Bart said.

On Tuesday evening all their things were in readiness to be taken to the station. As the east-bound train left at night, all the west-bound cars were devoted to the moving.

Now, at sunset, Tom was taking a last ride on his horse up and down in front of the house. Sarah and Bart sat on the door-step, watching him silently. After while Bart laid his hand on Sarah's.

"If only it had proved a success!" he said.

The girl sprang up without replying. Her heart was full, and she walked quickly away from the ranch, wishing to be alone. As she moved toward a rise of uncultivated land, she saw in the distance two or three antelope. Of late she had frequently seen the animals at sunrise and sunset.

She walked on through the sagebrush, with her eyes lowered, and suddenly stopped. She had come upon a fertile spot ten yards square; it was where the antelopes had been. The ground looked dark and moist, and Sarah, stooping, plunged her hands into it. Then she dropped to her knees and began eagerly to tear up the grass growing on the rich spot. If she dug deep enough she would come to water!

Suddenly she sprang up and ran toward the house; the boys saw her coming.

"Bring shovels! Bart, too! Come!" she cried, breathlessly.

When Tom and Bart arrived at the spot she was on her knees, digging with a stick; they joined with their shovels in the work.

It was moonlight when the water came trickling fast into the hole; and then Sarah lay down on the ground and wept softly.

The boys bowed the money which their uncle had forwarded for traveling expense, and developed their fine well. They engaged workmen to dig ditches which would conduct a free supply of water to the gardens. People who came from the town to see the well congratulated the owners, and said that the land had increased tenfold in value.

Among others, David Judson drove out one day. He said he had reconsidered Sarah's proposition, and was quite willing to take the ranch off her hands on the terms she had offered.

"We will not sell to you at any price," Sarah said, coldly.

When the man had gone Bart came up to his sister and put his arm around her.

"Sarah," he said, "I'm seeing clearer every day how much we owe you. It isn't only that you've led us into the promised land; you've kept us there."

"O Bart," she answered, "it truly wasn't for myself so much that I wanted to stay; it was for you. If you'd gone back, you—your couldn't have stood it. And now—"

"And now," he murmured, drawing in a deep breath of the dry, health-giving air, "I shall get well!"

Youth's Companion.

THE BAD REPUBLICANS.

Characterized by Blatant Democrats as Conspirators Against the Nation's Weal.

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"There can be only one aristocratic party in the country. There will be room enough for all the aristocrats in that when the people know that the party stands for." As Mr. Bryan has read Grover Cleveland and all his friends out of the democracy, with a big D, it follows that their only place is with the plutocracy and aristocracy represented by the republican party. Yet Mr. Bryan makes no kind of concession. He says in effect that republicans are aristocrats without knowing it. To quote his words:

"A great majority of the republicans of to-day are democrats at heart. They believe with Lincoln in 'government of the people, by the people and for the people.' I believe the only trouble is that they have not noticed the change that has taken place in the purpose and character and methods of the republican organization. . . . There can be no doubt of the democratic instincts of a large majority of the members of the republican party, but that party to-day is so controlled by organized wealth that the rank and file of the party are the committed about the policies nor are the interests of the rank and file considered by the leaders."

There is some consolation for republicans in knowing that even in the opinion of the great and only friend of democracy as a form of government and the peerless leader of democracy with a big D, republicans are not wholly bad, at least not intentionally so. They are aristocrats and plutocrats without knowing it, and are really entitled to be in better company. In the present distracted condition of the democratic party they would probably be welcome recruits to the democracy with a big D. It is a pity the ruling party of the country does not know it is ruining it.

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